

# College Preparation Event Leader’s Guide

Michael N. Keas, PhD • Professor of the History and Philosophy of Science • <http://college.swbts.edu>  
Copyright © Michael N. Keas 2011; 2014. All Rights Reserved.

## Table of Contents

<b>1. <i>Introduction to College Preparation</i> .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. <i>Organizing a College Preparation Event</i> .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. <i>Lesson Plans</i>.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. <i>The Toughest Test in College: Discussion Questions</i> .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5. <i>TrueU Promos and Teasers: Discussion Questions</i> .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6. <i>College Preparation Resources</i> .....</b>	<b>8</b>

# 1. Introduction to College Preparation

## **The Toughest Test in College**

Are students prepared for the toughest test in college? Many Christians are failing to keep their faith after a few years on campus. *The Toughest Test in College* DVD documentary introduces a way to pass this test of faith. Learn how to host a college preparation event that makes use of this documentary and additional resources. *The Toughest Test in College* documentary is a “bonus” feature on the TrueU DVD *Does God Exist*. It is also available on a separate DVD from Discovery Institute (while supplies last) at <http://www.scienceandgod.org/offer>. The other resources contained in the College Preparation Event Leader’s Guide are outlined below. This college prep mini-series, though standing on its own, also introduces the TrueU curriculum.

## **The Six Components of the College Preparation Event Leader’s Guide**

1. *Introduction*
2. *Organizing a College Preparation Event*  
Promote your event to Christian high schools, home school co-ops, and youth groups. Bring students and parents together to discuss how to gear up for higher education.
3. *Sample Lesson Plans*  
Consider planning two 75-minute college preparation sessions for your small group. This sample lesson plan can be modified for your audience.
4. *The Toughest Test in College: Discussion Questions*  
Distribute discussion questions that correlate with each segment of the *Toughest Test in College* DVD documentary.
5. *TrueU Promos and Teasers: Discussion Questions*  
Make your college preparation event a launching pad for a later offering of TrueU. While the *Toughest Test in College* documentary chiefly presents the collegial *challenges* to faith, TrueU offers a more complete *solution* to those problems.
6. *More College Preparation Resources*  
Prepare students for the academic and spiritual challenges of college. Topics in this handout range from roommate selection to recommended summer reading. These resources will also assist current college students to excel.

### **About the Author of the College Preparation Event and its Leader's Guide**

Michael N. Keas earned a Ph.D. in the history of science from the University of Oklahoma after a year as a Fulbright Scholar in East Germany. He is Professor of the History and Philosophy of Science at the College at Southwestern in Fort Worth (<http://college.swbts.edu>) and an adjunct professor in Biola University's M.A. program in Science and Religion. His scholarly and curricular work has received funding from agencies such as the National Science Foundation and the American Council of Learned Societies. He is a Senior Fellow of Discovery Institute and has contributed articles to several scholarly journals and anthologies. The materials in this guide reflect the views of the author and may not necessarily reflect the views of any organizations with which he is affiliated.

**Copyright:** Copyright © Michael N. Keas 2011; 2014. All Rights Reserved.

**Terms of use:** The copyright holder hereby grants the user a limited license to reproduce, distribute and print/photocopy the contents of the College Preparation Leader's Guide (hereinafter "the work") for educational, non-commercial use, subject to the following terms:

- Distribution must be by a user who is a recognized group leader or educator.
- Modified versions of the work must include acknowledgement of the original author. For example, the user may wish to create and distribute a modified version of one of the handouts. This is permitted contingent upon the purchaser making it clear to all potential audiences that modifications may not represent the views of the original author.
- The user acknowledges that the copyright holder has the right to revoke the license at any time.
- Commercial use of the work is not permitted until an express agreement is entered into with the copyright holder.

## 2. Organizing a College Preparation Event

### Promotion

- Show the two promos for TrueU's *Does God Exist?* and *Is the Bible Reliable?* These two promos will introduce both TrueU and the college preparation event that you are hosting.
- Show the first few minutes of *The Toughest Test in College* documentary.
- Promotional strategies for Christian high schools, home school co-ops, and youth groups.
  - Invite a Christian leader who is known to your community to co-host your event.
  - Emphasize objectivity in college preparation, not promoting a particular college.
  - The local event outlined here could supplement LiveAbove's "College Transition Webcast" ([www.liveabove.com](http://www.liveabove.com)), which is a national annual college preparation event (in February or March) promoted by many Christian organizations. Note that key college prep components are only found in the present leader's guide.
- How to pitch the college preparation event to parents
  - Learn how to pray for and talk with your students about the challenges of college.
  - More objectively evaluate the claims of college admission and housing offices.
  - Alert parents to Focus on the Family's worldview program for adults, The Truth Project, which would help them support the intellectual and spiritual growth of their families. TrueU is a prequel to the more extensive [www.thetruthproject.org](http://www.thetruthproject.org).
  - Senior citizens may attend because they may have college-bound grandchildren.

### Delivery

- Technology and ambience for a successful event.
  - Use a big screen and an adequate sound system.
  - Show the *The Toughest Test in College* (45 minute documentary).
  - Enable the leader to control the stopping points of the DVD to spur discussion.
- Modify a lesson plan (see sample plans in this document) to fit your situation.
- You might want to ask a local college professor to help lead the event.
  - Do not assume that faculty at a Christian college are committed to defending the historic Christian faith with publicly accessible evidence. Many students interviewed in *The Toughest Test in College* documentary voiced this problem.
  - Focus on objectively evaluating differing college environments rather than promoting a particular college or university.

### How to Offer an Annual College Preparation Event

- Convince your leaders that college preparation events help students keep their faith.
- Vary the event to attract the attendance of those who participated the previous year.
- Alternate each year between a local event (described in this document) and a nationally webcasted event: LiveAbove's "College Transition Webcast" ([www.liveabove.com](http://www.liveabove.com)), which is a national annual college preparation event (in February or March) promoted by many Christian organizations.
- Invite local college students to participate in the event.

## 3. Lesson Plans

### Session #1: 75 Minutes

- Distribute copies of “The Toughest Test in College: Discussion Questions.”
- Introduce session #1 by saying: “Are you prepared for the toughest test in college? Many Christians are failing to keep their faith after a few years on campus. *The Toughest Test in College* DVD documentary introduces a way to pass this test of faith.”
- Announce that you will cover the first part of the handout in session #1. You may cover more or less material depending upon the length of discussion after each DVD segment.
- View the introduction, pausing the DVD when “the test of social pressure” appears on a black screen. Cover the “introduction” discussion questions (#1 - #4) on the handout. If you wish, you may move backward on the DVD 30 seconds to Jay’s outdoor interview and thus ready for the next DVD segment after you finish leading a discussion about the “introduction.” But this is not necessary. You may simply resume playing the DVD at this “test of social pressure” point when you are ready to move on after the discussion of the first part of the handout. The same applies to the other DVD segment division screens in the rest of the DVD.
- View “the test of social pressure” and then cover the corresponding discussion questions (#5 - #6) on the handout.
- View “the test of relativism.” Stop the DVD when Jay appears in his outdoor interview talking about “experts” (he wiggles two sets of two fingers to make quotation marks as he says “experts” and “facts”). Turn off the DVD projector and turn up the lights. Cover “the test of relativism” discussion questions (#7 - #8) on the handout.
- Discuss the “College Preparation Resources” handout (or do this in session #2).
- Announce highlights to anticipate in session #2 (see the lesson plan below).

### Session #2: 75 Minutes

- Distribute more copies of “The Toughest Test in College: Discussion Questions.”
- View “the experts”; then cover the corresponding discussion questions.
- View the conclusion; then cover the corresponding discussion questions. The conclusion begins with Dr. Stephen Meyer talking about “publicly accessible evidence” for faith (and then it returns to student Emily Brooker to complete her story).
- View the promos for *Does God Exist?* and *Is the Bible Reliable?* and cover the handout “TrueU Promos and Teasers: Discussion Questions.” Optional: also view some of the teasers listed under *Does God Exist?*

### Additional Ideas

- You may wish to cover the same material in three or more shorter sessions.
- Pray in your group for your college-bound seniors after they share their college plans.
- Although students should lead out in discussion, parents may wish to participate too.
- Announce when your group will begin a study of the lengthier TrueU lessons. Offer a TrueU teaser (20 minutes) using “TrueU Promos & Teasers: Discussion Questions.”

## 4. The Toughest Test in College: Discussion Questions

### Introduction

1. How are the challenges of Christian and secular colleges different (and similar)? What did the interviewed students find most surprising about their college experience?
2. Imagine you are facing a dilemma similar to Emily Brooker's at Missouri State University. What happened when Emily resisted the pressure to advocate the public policy of allowing homosexuals to participate in foster care and adoption? How would you respond if asked to do a group project like this?
3. Why are atheism and agnosticism so prevalent in the academic world (especially in certain disciplines)?
4. Why should students study competing worldviews (in comparison with a Christian worldview) before entering college? Include discussion of the difference between facts and presuppositions. What presuppositions commonly dominate the college classroom?

### The Test of Social Pressure (a challenge to living out the Christian worldview)

5. Explain the gap between what students and their parents are told about the "safe" social settings of college campuses (secular and Christian), and what often actually happens there.
6. What is authentic Christian fellowship and how will this help you in college? Why should you consider contacting a college campus ministry or Christian roommate connection service ([www.liveabove.com](http://www.liveabove.com)) when you are making housing arrangements at a secular college?

### The Test of Relativism (a challenge to the Christian worldview)

7. Is there a good argument for the existence of moral absolutes such as "murder is wrong"? What's wrong with the claim: "that might be your truth, but the tuna salad is fine for me"? How does the story about spoiled tuna salad illustrate the problem with relativism?
8. How else can we resist the prevailing relativism of college campuses?

### The Test of "The Experts" (other challenges to the Christian worldview)

9. Give an example of a major error made by an important group of experts in the recent past. What do we learn from this embarrassing history of ideas? Are you prepared to think outside the conceptual box constructed by a college professor or a required textbook?

### Conclusion

10. How might you live differently in college if your faith is supported by publicly accessible evidence, rather than just human traditions, your private experience, or a "leap in the dark"?
11. How will you prepare for the mental and spiritual challenges of college?

## 5. TrueU Promos and Teasers: Discussion Questions

View the promos for *Does God Exist?* and *Is the Bible Reliable?* and discuss the following questions. Optional: also view some of the teasers listed under *Does God Exist?*

1. What are faith and reason?
  
2. How would evidence for God's existence affect worldview questions such as:
  - a. What is the prime reality (what everything else depends upon)?
  - b. What does it mean to be human?
  
3. How would evidence for the Bible's reliability affect worldview questions such as:
  - a. What does it mean to be human?
  - b. What is right and wrong?
  - c. What happens to a person at death?
  
4. Are you open to the possibility of scientific evidence that makes belief in God more reasonable than it might already be on the basis of your personal experience of God?
  
5. Does each person have faith in *some* worldview—whether a person is “religious” or not?
  
6. Why is it important for you to have reasons for your Christian faith?
  
7. Would you like to study the ten lessons of the first DVD set of the TrueU curriculum: *Does God Exist?* How about the second set of TrueU lessons: *Is the Bible Reliable?* This is one of the best ways to answer the above questions (and more) with well-supported reasons.

## 6. College Preparation Resources

1. Live Above ([www.liveabove.com](http://www.liveabove.com)) is a ministry of [www.youthtransitionnetwork.org](http://www.youthtransitionnetwork.org): a coalition of youth, college and other evangelical Christian ministries working together to transition students from high school to college and career. Use their Christian roommate connection service. Find campus ministries and local churches that are eager to help you flourish in college. The first week on campus has a huge impact on the rest of a college student's life, for good or for evil. Find supportive and academically responsible Christian fellowship as soon as possible. "Just Jesus and me," is not what Jesus has in mind for you.
2. TrueU ([www.scienceandgod.org/trueu](http://www.scienceandgod.org/trueu)) offers a series of Christian apologetics lectures. Apologetics is the study of evidence regarding God's existence and related issues. TrueU provides detailed background knowledge unavailable in popular-level DVDs such as the excellent Strobel series described below.
3. Whether or not students complete the TrueU curriculum, they are encouraged to join a Truth Project small group ([www.thetruthproject.org](http://www.thetruthproject.org)) once they are settled in their college town.
4. Lee Strobel has a DVD series based on his books by the same titles: *The Case for a Creator*, *The Case for Christ*, *The Case for Faith* (purchase the DVDs at [www.go2rpi.com](http://www.go2rpi.com)).
5. Access Research Network ([www.arn.org](http://www.arn.org)) is a convenient place to order books and DVDs about intelligent design and the weaknesses in Darwinian evolution omitted by textbooks. [The Privileged Planet](#), [Unlocking the Mystery of Life](#), and [Icons of Evolution](#) are good films.
6. *Expelled: The Movie* ([www.themovieexpelled.com](http://www.themovieexpelled.com)). Ben Stein investigates why many intellectuals suppress the scientific theory of intelligent design. Learn about the struggle for academic freedom.
7. Randolph Productions ([www.go2rpi.com](http://www.go2rpi.com)) is the cheapest place to order many of the DVDs mentioned above, especially when ordering in bulk (click "Ministry Give-Away Media").
8. Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture ([www.discovery.org/csc](http://www.discovery.org/csc)), the leading think tank devoted to intelligent design, is a portal to scholarly online articles and weblogs. Study this guide to intelligent design: [www.evolutionnews.org/BacktoSchoolGuide.pdf](http://www.evolutionnews.org/BacktoSchoolGuide.pdf). Advanced college students in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities may wish to apply ([www.discovery.org/csc/summerseminar](http://www.discovery.org/csc/summerseminar)) for an intensive nine-day seminar that will prepare them to make research contributions to the growing science of intelligent design.
9. Explore the often contentious relationship between faith and evolution through the resources at [www.faithandevolution.org](http://www.faithandevolution.org).
10. *Ratio Christi* ([www.ratiochristi.org](http://www.ratiochristi.org)) is a network of Christian apologetics student clubs with amazing potential. Similarly, the Intelligent Design and Evolution Awareness (IDEA) Center ([www.ideacenter.org](http://www.ideacenter.org)) helps students form IDEA clubs on college campuses.
11. Invite Cross Examined ([www.crossexamined.org](http://www.crossexamined.org)) or Probe Ministries ([www.probe.org](http://www.probe.org)) to your church or college campus to strengthen your reasons for Christian faith (host a debate).



12. Sites such as [www.leaderu.com](http://www.leaderu.com), [www.apologetics315.blogspot.com](http://www.apologetics315.blogspot.com), [www.4truth.net](http://www.4truth.net), [www.str.org](http://www.str.org), and [www.carm.org](http://www.carm.org) defend Christianity across all the academic disciplines in dialogue with adherents to other worldviews. Because top scholars have authored some of these online articles, you will find numerous sources suitable for term papers here.
13. Discover the identity of each prospective school. Most early American colleges were largely rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, as George Marsden explains in *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (Oxford University Press, 1994). Truth-seeking inquiry in higher education has proved difficult to maintain, even among recent institutions, regardless of their secular or religious origin. In many Christian colleges “Christianity” has become an extra-curricular appendage (e.g., chapel), rather than *integrated* into academics. Or worse, *integration* means revising Christianity to make it fit within materialistic and other non-Christian dogmas.
14. To prepare for the mental environment of a specific campus, obtain a list of distinguished guest speakers from the previous year. Have conservative speakers been excluded, as typically is the case in academia? Similarly, examine the campus newspaper to gauge the student climate of opinion. Sometimes the most liberal students control the op-ed pages, and so the newspaper may not be representative of the student population.
15. Some university faculty would consider it hate speech to even discuss the merits of research produced by social scientists that investigate ways to help those who wish to cease from homosexual behavior. To evaluate the legitimacy of this hate speech accusation, and to consider this as a case study that illuminates free speech disputes in other domains, visit <http://narth.com>—the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality. NARTH declares: “We respect the right of all individuals to choose their own destiny. NARTH is a professional, scientific organization that offers hope to those who struggle with unwanted homosexuality.” Do professional organizations devoted to individual rights and academic integrity (rather than politically correct ideology) exist in your field of study?
16. Speak Up ([www.speakupmovement.org/home/university](http://www.speakupmovement.org/home/university)) and FIRE ([www.thefire.org](http://www.thefire.org)) aim to protect individual rights, including religious liberty and freedom of speech, at America’s colleges and universities. Viewpoint discrimination among allegedly neutral institutions of higher education is especially common. Use the Speak Up and FIRE websites to see if viewpoint repression is prevalent on campuses you are considering.
17. U.S. News & World Report’s college ranking system ([www.usnews.com/rankings](http://www.usnews.com/rankings)) does not use most of the evaluative criteria we are using here. It is useful, but often misleading.
18. For an alternative to U.S. News & World Report’s college ranking system, see the ranking of the Center for College Affordability & Productivity ([www.centerforcollegeaffordability.org](http://www.centerforcollegeaffordability.org)). CCAP is a research organization with a free-market orientation that evaluates colleges based on results. Their rankings quantify answers to questions such as: Do students like their courses (based on [www.ratemyprofessor.com](http://www.ratemyprofessor.com))? How successful are they once they graduate? Nevertheless, even CCAP fails to use many of the evaluative criteria we are using here.
19. Surf the web to prepare: [www.collegeprep.com](http://www.collegeprep.com), [www.offtocollege.com](http://www.offtocollege.com), [www.college.com](http://www.college.com), [www.majorsexplored.com](http://www.majorsexplored.com), [www.college-scholarships.com](http://www.college-scholarships.com), and [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com). Some colleges recruit students through Homeschool Nation ([www.hsncommunity.com](http://www.hsncommunity.com)), where home school students can advertise themselves for admission and scholarships.

20. If you choose a major in the social or natural sciences, manage carefully any doubts you might have about Darwinian evolution or any interest you may have in the scientific theory of intelligent design. Wise management includes never identifying yourself on Internet documents as a Darwin doubter because these web pages could be used against you if you pursue a career in the sciences or elsewhere in academia. Also be careful how you express yourself before professors who might write a letter of recommendation on your behalf for graduate school admission. If you later pursue graduate work in the sciences, you may have to mute your criticisms of Darwinism completely until you graduate and find a job that is beyond risk of termination due to viewpoint discrimination. Undergraduates are rarely punished for challenging Darwinian orthodoxy. Graduate students, however, should expect devastating consequences.
21. Replace much of your screen time (movies, video games, etc.) with reading and meaningful interaction with people and God. This will improve the quality of your life and your GPA.
22. Here are the most important books to read before entering college.

*Books to strengthen your Christian worldview (listed in order of increasing difficulty):*

- J. Budziszewski, [\*How to Stay Christian in College\*](#) (NavPress, 2004). If you read nothing else, read this book, which is the most concise analysis of the most pressing problems.
- Arthur Holmes, [\*The Idea of a Christian College\*](#) (Eerdmans, 1987). Those attending secular institutions will still benefit from this global challenge to thinking Christianly.
- James W. Sire, [\*The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog\*](#) (Intervarsity, 2009). Learn to compare Christianity with the main alternative ways of viewing the world.
- William Lane Craig, [\*Reasonable Faith\*](#) (Crossway, 2008). Lee Strobel's popular level books and DVDs will assist you in grasping Craig's scholarly book. Strobel's books: [\*The Case for a Creator\*](#), [\*The Case for Christ\*](#), [\*The Case for Faith\*](#). Purchase Strobel's DVDs (identified by the same book titles above) at [www.go2rpi.com](http://www.go2rpi.com). Other treatments of these issues are also available: [www.TrueU.org](http://www.TrueU.org), [www.crossexamined.org](http://www.crossexamined.org), and [www.probe.org](http://www.probe.org).

*Books to help prepare you for college-level studying, reading, writing, and thinking:*

- Randall S. Hansen and Katharine Hansen, [\*The Complete Idiot's Guide to Study Skills\*](#) (Alpha, 2008). This book offers practical study tips that are difficult to find elsewhere.
- William Strunk and E. B. White, [\*The Elements of Style\*](#) (Longman, 2008). Most students need to brush up on grammar and writing style. This classic book makes the review fun.
- Mortimer Adler and Charles Van Doren, [\*How to Read a Book\*](#) (1972). Find any edition of this book dated 1972 or later. It will increase your reading comprehension and help you read with a critical mind. Adler, the most influential twentieth-century analyst of "great" books, became a believer in the greatest book (the Bible) late in his life.
- Louise Cowan and Os Guinness, [\*Invitation to the Classics\*](#) (Baker, 2006). This book introduces seventy-five of the great books of the Western tradition (the sort of books Mortimer Adler promoted), and why Christians should read them.
- If you plan to take college-level calculus, review with George F. Simmons, [\*Precalculus Mathematics in a Nutshell: Geometry, Algebra, Trigonometry\*](#) (Wipf & Stock, 2003).
- Science majors should read the articles at [www.discovery.org/csc/essentialReadings.php](http://www.discovery.org/csc/essentialReadings.php) and order books such as [\*Signature in the Cell\*](#), [\*Privileged Planet\*](#), and [\*Explore Evolution\*](#) ([www.exploreevolution.com](http://www.exploreevolution.com)). Register at [www.bio-complexity.org](http://www.bio-complexity.org) to use *BIO-Complexity*, a peer-reviewed scientific journal devoted to evaluating intelligent design.